

all is permissible
waving his suffering in their faces
talking about it in words
that mean nothing to anyone
but himself.

they don't appreciate his genius
& he hammers away at them
until it's too much to bear
& people start getting up &
leaving.

they leave a few at a time
like in the late innings
of a one-sided ball game.

reading you my new poems

as you dried your hair
wanting you to hear them all
before you left for work
getting all excited & nervous
feeling somewhat ridiculous
my voice real loud like maybe
you were a hard of hearing old woman
over some back fence
& the poems were neighborhood gossip
juicy tales of infidelity & child beating
better than Readers' Digest & television
& you sitting there
brushing your hair
clothes pins in mouth
squinting your eyes so you could hear
taking it all in
as if my words really mattered
as if you couldn't wait
to get to a telephone
& repeat them
to all your friends.

Dumbarton Bridge

it's a drawbridge, one of the first bridges
to cross San Francisco Bay
looks like it was built with an erector set
& it's often closed, seldom used
if someone jumps from this bridge
it's a tragedy, not a statistic
they might even come back to walk it
on full moon nights.

the narrow macadam road leading to it
winds thru farm country
thru small redneck towns
that don't seem like California
at all.

you feel like you're driving
on a pontoon
the road cutting thru tidelands
the bay just a few feet
from your tires
gulls lining the road
like hitchhikers
thick cattails growing wild
an abandoned radio station.

a pontoon back thru time
Hank Williams on the radio
instead of Neil Young
crawfish pie more important
than acoustics.

you might want to stop &
get some cattails
see if they still keep
the mosquitoes away.

small press scene

the little mag as starlet couch
drop your drawers for the editor
& his casting crew
you'll make the big time
one day kid
meanwhile stretch out here
show your long legs off
tighten up your lines
don't worry about a thing
I been doing this 20 years
ain't seen nothing the likes
of you
relax, roll over there
show me some more leg
baby.